

EU / UK Youth

Stronger Together for social action

Teacher Facilitator Notes

<https://www.britishcouncil.be/programmes/education/stronger-together/social-action>



Introduction

The [EU/UK Youth Stronger Together](#) is a two-year project (2023-2025) implemented in co-operation with the [European Movement International](#) and co-funded by the [European Union](#). It offers young people aged 15–30 from the EU and the UK opportunities to connect, co-operate, influence and implement change together on issues of common interest.

The project aims to facilitate close and sustainable relationship between young people in the UK and the EU for Europe's collective benefit. We work with various groups of young people through different strands of the programme.

As part of the Social Action strand of the programme focusing on schools, we organise thematic events, workshops, and a competition to facilitate partnership building between schools in the UK and EU.

We aspire to highlight the role of young people aged 15–18 as changemakers, active global citizens and leaders at local, national and European level. You can find out more on:

<https://www.britishcouncil.be/programmes/education/stronger-together/social-action>

Teacher Facilitator Notes

This project is based on collaboration between students in different countries working together. For the absolute best results international collaboration is vital, however, the ideas can work well within an individual school too.

These notes offer suggestions for colleagues in the teacher facilitator role to support the students. Each group and partnership will have a different dynamic and there will be variation in how each project evolves. Overall, the collaboration in the 'Stronger Together for Social Action' will be its most effective and the outcomes the strongest when facilitators in the partner countries are able to empower the students to lead the project themselves.

This collection of resources has been specifically designed to support schools, teachers and young people involved in the British Council [EU UK Youth Stronger Together programme](#) during the 2023 / 2024 school year.

The learning materials address three themes, as follows:

- Climate and Sustainability
- Ukraine war and integration of refugees
- Fake News and Disinformation



For each theme you will find information and activities organised under three headings: **Learn, Explore, Act.**

- The background notes, entitled '**Learn**' aim to provide some essential information to help teachers and students to engage with each topic before the thematic events. There are also links to enable further investigation and student-led research.
- The '**Explore**' section offers a range of exploratory global learning activities to unpack the theme, designed to encourage critical engagement, debate, collaboration and pupil voice.
- '**Act**' activities will afford opportunities for personal reflection and responsible action, where young people can act together and create change. Both Explore and Act sections provide collaborative activities that can be exchanged with project partners or, alternatively, can be worked on by schools alone.

Building mid-21 Century skills

We encourage teachers / facilitators using this set of resources to adapt the materials according to your teaching and learning context. The activities should be viewed as a guide, where flexibility and adaptability are presumed. You know your learners best!

These resources can be used to build the **mid-21 Century skills** required to support close and stable relationships between young people. These are built on trust, openness, and critical debate within 'safer spaces', where how people relate to others is as important as what they learn. The activities aim to support strong, inclusive, and integrated communities through using a range of Global Learning Methodologies to promote leadership, pupil voice, collaboration and problem solving, and employability and inclusion.

Global Learning Methodologies, such as Diamond 9s, Continuum Lines, Issues Trees, Debating Circles etc. are participative, dialogue-based, open-ended teaching methods which enable engagement with complex global issues and diverse perspectives. They afford opportunities for participants to build and practise the life skills to negotiate change, to transform relationships, to think independently and to make conscious choices about their own lives and how they affect the lives of others. The learning processes will encourage participants to live with and learn from difference and to establish ethical, responsible, and caring relationships beyond their identity groups, within a rights-based approach.

The theoretical framework adopted by this collection draws on **Social Contact Theory**. Over 20 years of academic research shows that 'confidence in contact' can be inculcated by both face-to-face and remote meetings. It increases empathy, a sense of similarity, improves knowledge of others and develops positive attitudes to those not yet met. Social Contact Theory states the importance of key conditions for developing close and stable relationships between young people, namely meaningful interactions between individuals, equal status, intergroup co-operation, common goals, enjoyable activity, and support from authority figures / role models. By focussing on equitable shared outcomes, through a set of resources looking at the global issues highlighted in chosen topics of common interest, participants will become change-makers, active global citizens, and leaders. For more information see the work of Dr



Lindsay Cameron: <https://thelinkingnetwork.org.uk/evaluation/the-linking-network-researcher-in-residence-from-1st-may-2019-dr-lindsey-cameron/research-by-lindsey-cameron-kent-university/>

Teachers as Facilitators

When a teacher employs skills of facilitation it puts the onus on the participants to manage their own learning process, with the guidance of a teacher mentor. The role of this mentor, or facilitator is to introduce ideas, encourage sharing of perspectives and frame participants actions in a collaborative and enabling way, guiding but not controlling the outcomes. To shift from a traditional teaching role to that of a facilitator is a mind-set step change. It involves putting oneself in the service of participants; not to provide the answers, but to raise questions, stimulate thinking, encourage exploration, make associations, and prompt reflection and evaluation.

Hart's Ladder of Participation

This especially useful tool can help teachers and students think about the process of young people taking an active role in decision making and giving an opportunity for them to have a voice and lead change. You can find it here: <https://www.mefirst.org.uk/resource/arnsteins-ladder-of-participation/>

Reflection: Using Hart's Ladder as a tool, consider where your approach as a teacher facilitator sits – which number rung is closest to your current practice?

Now consider your ideal approach. Do your real and ideal approaches match? If not, what steps or adjustments would you need to make?

Communication and collaboration

In the frame of the EU UK Youth Stronger Together, some schools were selected to take part in the School partnerships which will work together on social action project through facilitated sessions with a British Council trainer. However, you can find as follows some suggestions and tips for working with your students and with other project schools beyond the EU UK Youth Stronger Together project. In addition, the following notes could help get your classroom ready for participation at the Virtual Thematic events.

Learning in a global context: This project is taking place in several countries globally. Clear starting points, shared aims and good collaborative practice are the key to success and the initial vision can be explored and shared with your own students and your international partners.

Communications: Getting to know each other is an essential early step.

- Participants aged 15-18 should be able to initiate this themselves (with teacher facilitator monitoring). They might like to start with simple introductions, favourite foods and music etc.
- Establish some **Ground Rules** with your group, reaching consensus about what is and is not appropriate in terms of behaviour and how we relate to each other.
- Establish weekly virtual communications – even if it's just to 'check in'. Padlet or WhatsApp (on your laptop) may be really effective ways of sharing work and ideas.



Simple ‘getting to know’ exercises can be extremely useful, such as exchanging thoughts about how you can make the world a better place, sharing your outcomes of the “What’s in the News about climate change?” activity, Zoom discussion of aspirations for the project etc.

Starting question for all students: The first topic is “Climate and Sustainability”. Thinking of this topic consider the question: ***what do we want to achieve by exploring this issue together?***

In small groups you could explore this question, making notes on flip-chart paper. As the teacher facilitator you might want to lead on this e.g., recording the key points to support the students on their project journey. You can come up with questions to address collectively or through a student representative to the panellists/experts on the day.

Shared Planning: Partners should combine early thinking to give a basis for future working together:

- What is our overall time scale?
- How will we organise our project together?
- Who will do what?
- How will the teams tell people what we’ve done?
- Are there short-term target dates?
- When is our next meeting?
- How will you evaluate / peer review your collaboration? Revisit your aims often as your project unfolds!

Appoint key people: e.g., communicators; writers; convenors; researchers; evaluators.

Agree on outcomes: e.g., a report, a campaign, an arts performance delivered live and online.

Action phase: creating content. This might involve a practical outcome such as videos, surveys, action plans, dramatic interpretation. Setting up an online conference, debate, inviting relevant speakers online and then further discussion. You’re only limited by your imagination!

Review, monitor and evaluate:

- how will you keep your project on track? A GANT chart or Action Plan will allow you to project-manage your collaboration.
- How will you evaluate your outcomes against your aims?
- How well are you achieving your aims?
- How well are you collaborating with your partners?

Publish and present your work: home and abroad. How will you share your outputs? Spread the word? Influence others?

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